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DATE 2 MarPAGE A3

Chilean Official Who Knew Suspects Died Mysteriously

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SANTIAGO, Chile — A Chilean diplomat who might have identified two men wanted for questioning in the bombing that killed former Ambassador Orlando Letelier in Washington died five months ago under mysterious circumstances.

The diplomat, Guillermo Osorio, had signed a request to the U.S. Embassy here that diplomatic visas be granted to two men carrying official passports issued by his office.

The passports, with false names, were used by two men who entered the United States in July 1976 and who are suspected of having arranged with Cuban exiles to blow up Letelier's car two months later. The

exiled Letelier was an active opponent of the military regime here.

THE IDENTITY OF the two men, however, is not known. The names on the passports, Juan Williams Rose and Alberto Romeral Jara, are false. A man named in the local press as being one of them on the basis of photographs has denied any involvement. Rafael Undurraga Cruzat, an electronics technician reported to be the man named as Alberto Romeral Jara, said he had never been in the United States. The other supposed missing person, Michael Townley, was reported to be in Santiago, but has not made a public appearance.

The death of Osorio is the subject of a court inquiry. According to legal sources, the death certificate gave the cause of death as a heart attack. A new autopsy was ordered after members of his family said he had been shot in the head, and the body has been exhumed.

The day the diplomat died in his bedroom he had been to an official lunch for visiting Peruvian military authorities. According to his wife, he came home accompanied by Gen. Juan Manuel Contreras Sepulveda, who was then the head of Chile's National Intelligence Directorate.

FAMILY MEMBERS said he had been in good spirits up to the day of his death, particularly after having been told he was to be appointed to an important ambassadorship. Reports at the time that he had committed suicide were not dispelled by the death certificate, which was issued by the Chilean Forensic Institute.

U.S. Justice Department investigators inquiring into Letelier's death believe that the two bearers of the passports were agents of Chile's secret intelligence service, DINA, then under Contreras. The general is now a high official in the army ministry and a close adviser to President Augusto Pinochet.